

Message Text

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15

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, IS

SUBJ: TRANSPORTATION: US/ISRAEL COOPERATION; EL

AL LANDING RIGHTS; TWA SERVICES TO ISRAEL

REF: TEL AVIV 6519 AND 4718

1. I MET WITH MINISTER OF TRANSPORT GAD YAACOBI ON DECEMBER 2 AT HIS REQUEST. HE SAID HE WANTED TO INFORM ME OF HIS RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON WITH SECRETARY BRINEGAR AND UNDER SECRETARY SISCO. HE DESCRIBED BOTH SESSIONS AS HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE AND INFORMATIVE AND SAID HE WAS MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE TIME AND ATTENTION GIVEN TO HIM. REFERRING TO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED WITH SECRETARY BRINEGAR, YAACOBI NOTED THAT HE WILL SHORTLY TRANSMIT AN INVITATION FOR US EXPERTS TO COME TO ISRAEL IN JANUARY TO REVIEW ISRAELI LONG-RANGE PLANNING IN TRANSPORTATION, AIRPORTS, CIVIL AVIATION AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS IN TEL AVIV METROPOLITAN AREA.

2. ON QUESTION OF EL AL, HE SAID THAT GOI WAS REQUESTING LANDING RIGHTS AT CHICAGO AND MIAMI IN ADDITION TO NEW YORK. HE HAD NOTED IN WASHINGTON THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WERE CALLED FOR IN NIXON/RABIN JOINT STATEMENT OF JUNE 17. HE KNEW THERE WERE PROBLEMS BUT UNDERSTOOD FROM
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EL AL THAT AT PRESENT SOME 80 PERCENT OF TRAVELERS FROM MIAMI AND

CHICAGO NOW GO TO NEW YORK TO TAKE EL AL FLIGHTS TO ISRAEL. THUS ACTUAL IMPACT ON US AIRLINES WOULD BE QUITE SMALL. HE SAID THAT UNDER SECRETARY SISCO HAD AGREED TO LOOK INTO MATTER AND LET HIM KNOW WITHIN TWO OR THREE WEEKS WHETHER NEGOTIATIONS ON LANDING RIGHTS COULD BEGIN.

3. AS FOR TWA SERVICES, YAACOBBI SAID THAT GOI HAD BEEN VERY DISTURBED TO LEARN OF TWA PLANS TO TERMINATE BY FEBRUARY ITS FAR-EAST ROUTE VIA BEN GURION. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT TWA AND PAN AM HAVE AGREED THAT TWA WOULD DROP THIS FLIGHT WITH PAN AM BECOMING ONLY US CARRIER SERVING FAR-EAST FROM WESTERN EUROPE, ALTHOUGH USG HAS NOT YET APPROVED THIS STEP. PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL, OF COURSE, IS THAT PAN AM FLIES VIA BEIRUT, AND ISRAEL WOULD BE LEFT WITH ONLY AIR FRANCE FLYING EASTWARD FROM ISRAEL. YAACOBBI SAID HE WISHED TO REITERATE THAT GOI CONSIDERS CONTINUATION OF THIS TWA FLIGHT VIA ISRAEL "VITAL AND ESSENTIAL". AT THIS POINT, DIRECTOR GENERAL HIRAN INTERJECTED TO SAY THAT POSSIBLY TWA AND PAN AM COULD WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY AT LEAST THREE FLIGHTS PER WEEK COULD FLY VIA BEN GURION, WITH OTHER FLIGHTS GOING VIA BEIRUT.

4. I RESPONDED THAT I WOULD CERTAINLY REPORT THEIR VIEWS TO WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, IN ALL CANDOR THIS IS A VERY DIFFICULT TIME TO MAKE DEMANDS ON TWA AND PAN AM. BOTH AIRLINES HAVE CRUSHING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, AND THEY HAVE TO CONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY QUESTION OF PROFITABILITY OF ALL ROUTES, INCLUDING FAR EASTERN ROUTE VIA MIDDLE EAST. AS FOR ISRAELI MARKET, RECENT INCREASE IN TRAVEL TAX IS EXPECTED TO RESULT IN FURTHER REDUCTION IN TRAVEL. MOREOVER, FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES OF TWA AND PAN AM ARE CERTAIN TO BEAR ON GOI REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL LANDING RIGHTS IN US.

5. CONCLUDING IN CONSTRUCTIVE VEIN, I PROPOSED "KEATING SOLUTION TO US/ISRAEL CIVIL AVIATION PROBLEMS", I.E., HAVE GOI PROVIDE SUBSIDIES TO BOTH TWA AND PAN AM. THIS, I SAID, WOULD MITIGATE US AIRLINES' OPPOSITION TO VARIOUS ISRAELI DESIDERATA FROM US IN CIVIL AVIATION FIELD. YAACOBBI SMILED.

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6. COMMENT: I DO NOT SEE HOW GOI CAN EXPECT TO GET ADDITIONAL LANDING RIGHTS FOR EL AL AT THIS TIME. I BELIEVE THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THIS, DESPITE REFERENCE IN NIXON/RABIN STATEMENT. KEATING

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